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Letter dated 28 February 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I write to you, in my capacity as Chair of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, to convey the Movement's grave concern regarding the critical situation of the thousands of Palestinian prisoners and detainees, including children and women, who are being unlawfully held by Israel, the occupying Power, in prisons and detention centres in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel.

While the Movement expresses its deep appreciation for the principled statements and positions you have affirmed, including through your Personal Representative, Robert Serry, on this critical issue, we underscore the urgent need at this time for international attention and efforts to address the plight of Palestinian prisoners and detainees. We emphasize in this regard the urgency of attention to this crisis, which has raised tensions and is causing further instability in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

The Non-Aligned Movement stresses its grave concern in particular about the recent death of a Palestinian man, Arafat Jaradat, in an Israeli prison on 23 February 2013, following his arrest on 18 February by the Israeli occupying forces, and about the circumstances surrounding his detention and death, including reports of his subjugation to forced interrogations and beatings. Echoing the call made by your Personal Representative, the Movement calls for an independent, impartial and transparent investigation, to be carried out under the auspices of the United Nations, into this serious incident as soon as possible and for the release of the results of the investigation. The Movement would be grateful for your attention and efforts to facilitate this important matter and to contribute to diffusing the tense situation, which risks further destabilization with far-reaching consequences.

In this connection, the Movement also conveys its deep concern regarding the plight of several Palestinian prisoners and detainees who are undertaking long-term hunger strikes in peaceful, non-violent protests against their detention by Israel without charge or trial and other abuses and oppressive measures that violate their most fundamental human rights. The lives of at least four men on hunger strike are

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in imminent danger owing to their deteriorating health conditions. The Movement calls for immediate attention to this crisis and for an urgent, humane solution to their plight in accordance with international legal standards and principles. Furthermore, it reiterates its demand that Israel release all Palestinian prisoners and detainees and cease forthwith its arbitrary arrest and detention of Palestinian civilians.

It must be reaffirmed that Israel has specific obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, towards the Palestinian prisoners and detainees under its incarceration and the entire Palestinian civilian population under its military occupation. We thus urge you to use your good offices and the moral authority with which you speak on behalf of the United Nations, consistent with the purposes and principles of its Charter, relevant resolutions and the applicable provisions of international law, to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to respect its legal obligations in this regard. A clear message must be conveyed to Israel that it will be held accountable by the international community for its violations of international law.

Moreover, the Non-Aligned Movement stresses the necessity of ensuring the requisite assistance to Palestinian prisoners and their families, including for the reintegration of prisoners into their communities, particularly in the light of the devastating impact this issue has had on Palestinian society as a whole. We express our appreciation in this regard for the efforts of the United Nations agencies on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

In parallel with your actions and those of your Personal Representative, the Movement believes that all other United Nations bodies, particularly the Security Council and the Human Rights Council, should live up to the expectation of the international community and fulfil their responsibilities, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, relevant resolutions and the applicable provisions of international law, with respect to the plight of the prisoners and detainees that are unlawfully held by the Israelis.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 37, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammad **Khazaee**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
and Chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement Coordinating Bureau